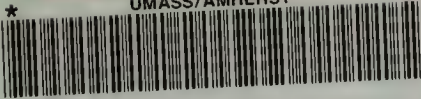


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Basic Skills Improvement Policy

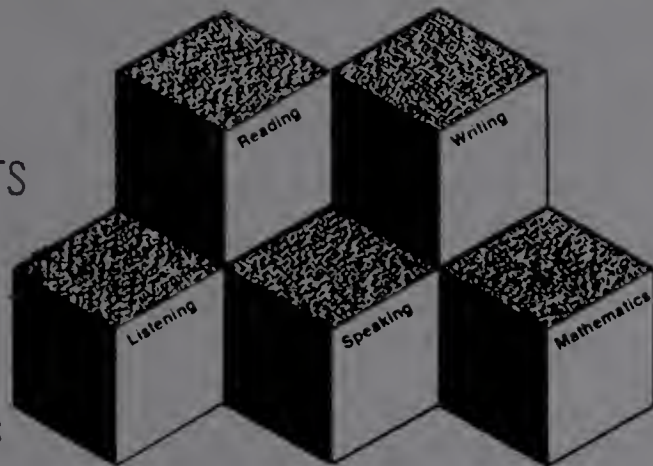
**1984/85 STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OF
MINIMUM STANDARDS IN THE BASIC SKILLS
OF
READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS
AND LISTENING**

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
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BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

1984-85 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum
Standards in the Basic Skills of
Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Listening

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

Bureau of Research and Assessment
Massachusetts Department of Education
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

February, 1986

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1984/85 Performance Data

The 1984/85 Basic Skills testing results show overall 92% of Massachusetts students achieved the minimum standards established by their school districts using locally selected tests. In all grade levels and skill areas, passing percentages stayed the same or within one percentage point of the previous year's results. The figures below summarize the comparison of this year's results with last year's figures.

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Early Elementary	Same	Same	Same	Same
Later Elementary	+1%	+1%	-1%	+1%
Secondary	Same	Same	Same	-1%

Five-Year Performance Data

During the five years of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy, the performance of Massachusetts students improved slightly in all but one area. The table below shows the gains in the percentages of students achieving minimum standards over the past five years.

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Early Elementary	+1%	+4%	+1%
Later Elementary	+1%	+4%	+1%
Secondary	+1%	+3%	Same

In addition, over the five years, several patterns of performance for particular sub-populations were noticeable:

- Females had higher passing percentages than males.
- Passing percentages among secondary students were lower than for both levels of elementary students.

- Students in wealthier communities had higher passing percentages.
- Students in large cities had lower passing percentages.
- Minority students were over-represented in the group of students failing to achieve minimum standards and among exempted students.
- In all skill areas and grade levels, the gap in performance between the lowest and highest performing racial/ethnic groups decreased during the five years of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy.

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

A. Background

This report provides a statewide statistical summary and analysis of the data submitted by local school districts in Massachusetts for the "1984-85 Annual Report on Basic Skills Improvement Programs." All public school districts were required to submit this report to the Massachusetts Department of Education under Section 40.09 of the Regulations for Implementation of the Policy on Basic Skills Improvement. This section requires districts to report annually:

"...the number and percentage of students by race, sex, and linguistic minority who have and have not achieved the minimum standards established by the public school district for the early elementary, later elementary, and secondary levels."

The Regulations were promulgated by the State Board of Education on January 23, 1979, after the Board adopted the Policy on Basic Skills Improvement on August 29, 1978.

Under the Policy and Regulations, school districts were required to develop basic skills improvement program plans for the skills of reading, writing and mathematics by August 1, 1980 and plans for the skill of listening by August 1, 1981, for three grade levels - early elementary (K-3), later elementary (4-6) and secondary (7-12). At all grade levels, these program plans contained the following components:

1. a description of how administrators, teachers, parents, employers, students (at the secondary level only), and the general public participated in the development of the plan;
2. the basic skills objectives and level of achievement (minimum standards) for each skill;
3. the instruments selected to evaluate student achievement of minimum standards;
4. the grade level at which students will be evaluated;
5. a description of how the public will receive information on the plan; and
6. a description of the follow-up instructional programs and services to be provided for students not achieving minimum standards.

School districts were required to initiate these program plans during the 1980-81 school year (the 1982-83 school year for listening). By August 31 of each school year, school districts reported (along with other data) the following information on their program results at each grade level and for each skill:

1. the grade level in which students were evaluated;
2. the evaluation instrument or instruments which were administered;
3. a description of the minimum standard used to determine if students achieved basic skills;
4. the number of students (reported by sex and racial/ethnic categories) evaluated who achieved and did not achieve minimum standards;
5. the number of students (reported by sex and racial/ethnic categories) exempted from the program or not evaluated during the school year.

This report displays and analyzes statewide data that should be of most interest to the State Board of Education, Department of Education staff, school committee members, local school district staff and the general public.¹ Readers interested in information from the 1984/85 Annual Reports that is not available in this report should contact the Department of Education's Regional Center that services their community.

B. Description of Data Reporting and Analysis Procedures

The specific data elements reported by school districts on their "1984-85 Annual Report on Basic Skills Improvement Programs" and the procedures used to code, analyze and report these data were as follows:

1. Grade Level and Skill - Districts reported their basic skills results at three grade levels. These grade levels were early elementary (grades K-3), later elementary (grades 4-6), and secondary (grades 7-12). Within each grade level, districts reported the same type of results for the skills of reading, writing, mathematics and listening.

¹Similar reports, summarizing the statewide student achievement of basic skills for the 1980/81, 1981/82, 1982/83, and 1983/84 school years are available at the various Regional Education Centers of the Department.

2. Initial Grade Evaluated - Within each grade level, districts were only required to evaluate students at one grade. On their Annual Reports, districts indicated in which grade within each level students were evaluated. At the early elementary level, schools evaluated students in either grade 1, 2 or 3. At the later elementary level, schools evaluated students in either grade 4, 5 or 6. At the secondary level, schools evaluated students in either grade 7, 8 or 9. Data on the number of districts which reported students at each grade level are displayed in Sections II, III and IV.
3. Final Evaluation - Each district was required to report the number of students who did not achieve minimum standards by the end of the eleventh or twelfth grade. The local district selected which of these two grades would be the final reporting grade. In 1984-85, districts that selected the following grade levels in their Basic Skills Improvement Plans submitted final evaluation data:

Initial Grade Level Evaluated	Final Evaluation Reporting Grade
7	11
8	11
8	12
9	11
9	12

4. Evaluation Instrument - For each grade level and skill, districts were required to report the name of the evaluation instrument or instruments they administered to evaluate students for the achievement of minimum standards. They also indicated the publisher of the instrument, subtests used, and copyright date. A code number was assigned to each instrument. Data on the evaluation instruments administered are discussed in Section VII of this report. Some districts administered more than one instrument at a particular grade level and skill. Because of column limitations in the computer data field, only one of the instruments could be entered into the file. Districts using more than one instrument were asked by the Department of Education which instrument should be coded.
5. Minimum Standard - For each grade level and skill, districts reported the minimum score (or other indicator of performance) that students had to obtain in order to be reported as achieving standards. The minimum standard was reported differently in reading, mathematics and listening than in writing.

- a. In reading, mathematics and listening, the minimum standard was reported as the number of test items students had to answer correctly of the total number of items on the test. All standards were converted and coded as the percentage of items students had to answer correctly on the test.

In some districts, it was not possible to convert the standard to a percentage correct. In these cases, the minimum standard was coded as NK (not keypunched). For districts that administered more than one test for a particular grade level/skill, only the standard for the test coded in the evaluation instrument column was keypunched. Finally, some districts established a minimum standard for different sections (e.g. subtests) of a test battery. Because of the column limitations in the data field, the minimum standards on each of the subtests could not be coded. For districts that set standards on different subtests, the standard was reported as the percentage of items a student had to answer correctly on the total test.

- b. For writing², school districts administered either an objective-item test and/or a writing sample(s). When districts administered only an objective-item test, the writing standard was coded and reported as the percentage of items on the test students had to answer correctly.

Districts which administered writing samples usually scored these samples using either the holistic or analytic method. Most districts using the holistic method of scoring writing samples had two people rate each writing sample on a scale of 1 to 4 (with 1 the lowest score assigned to a paper and 4 the highest score). The total score on a paper rated in this manner thus ranged from 2 to 8. When two writing samples were administered, the scores on both samples were either combined so that the students' scores could range from 4 to 16 (a scale of 2-8 on both samples) or the scores on both samples were reported individually on the 2-8 scale. Some districts used a variation of this holistic scoring method (e.g. rating on a 5 point rather than a 4 point scale; using three raters rather than two raters).

² See Basic Skills Improvement Policy Implementation Guide #2 (Revised Edition): Writing Assessment Manual for a detailed discussion of scoring writing samples

Districts using the analytic scoring method reported standards as numbers which were either comparable to an objective-test item score or a holistic score. These standards were coded and reported on the basis of what school districts reported.

If districts administered both an objective-item test and a writing sample(s) at a particular grade level, only the standard on the writing sample(s) was coded and reported because of column limitations in the data field.

In some cases the standards reported by school districts could not be converted into a percentage correct or holistic score. When this situation occurred the standards were coded and reported as NK (not keypunched).

Because of the wide variation and non-comparability of scoring procedures and standards, no range of standards or summary statistics are displayed for writing in this report. Readers interested in information about district scoring procedures and minimum standards should contact the Department's regional office that services their community.

6. Students Evaluated for Achievement of Minimum Standards - For each skill and grade level, districts reported the number of students evaluated for achievement of minimum standards. For the students they evaluated, districts reported the number who achieved minimum standards and the number who did not achieve minimum standards. Districts also reported this information by sex and race/ethnicity as follows:
- a. Black (not of Hispanic origin): A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, except those under Hispanic.
 - b. Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish cultures or origin - regardless of race.
 - c. White (not of Hispanic origin): A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
 - d. Other: This category includes persons of American or Alaskan Native heritage and persons of Asian or Pacific Islander heritage. An American Indian or Alaskan Native is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. An Asian or Pacific Islander is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, or the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

Portuguese and Cape Verdean students are not considered Hispanic. They are reported in either the Black or White categories.

The number of students reported by individual school districts as achieving minimum standards was totalled for each grade level and skill. These statewide figures on the number of students who achieved and who did not achieve the minimum standards established by local communities are displayed in Sections II-V of this report.

7. Students Exempted/Not Evaluated - For each grade level and skill, districts also reported the number of students who were exempted from the Basic Skills Improvement Program or who were not evaluated during 1984-85. There were three categories of students who were exempted or not evaluated: Special Education exemption, Limited English Ability exemption, and Other.³ This information was also reported by the sex and race/ethnicity of the students. Statewide figures on the number of students exempted/not evaluated are displayed in Sections II-V of this report.
8. Data Reporting - Districts were required to report the number of students meeting and not meeting standards and the number exempted or not evaluated. These data were also reported by the sex and race/ethnicity of the students. In some cases, there were omissions or discrepancies in the sex and race/ethnicity data such that these number totals did not add up to the overall totals. While efforts were made to correct these, it was not possible to do so in all instances. Therefore, in some instances, the sex and/or race/ethnicity number totals may not add up to the overall number totals.

Related to this, the reader will note that in some tables and figures, percentage figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. This is footnoted where appropriate.

Finally, it should be noted that, in some cases, district totals may vary slightly from those in other cases. Generally, this is because of either non-reporting or because the data were not keypunched.

³ Please refer to Section 40.10 of the Regulations for the Implementation of the Policy on Basic Skills Improvement for definitions of the exemption categories. The "Other" category included students who were never evaluated during 1984/85 because they were absent whenever tests were administered or students who transferred into a district after testing was completed.

C. Cautions in Using and Interpreting the Data

There are three cautionary notes that the reader should consider when using and interpreting the data in this report. First, the Policy and Regulations, as noted earlier, encouraged a high degree of local decision-making and flexibility in designing local basic skills programs. This resulted, as would be expected, in wide variations and differences in:

- the evaluation instruments selected
- the specific grades at which students were tested
- the minimum standards established
- the time of year in which students were tested
- policies and practices on exemptions

The various figures on statewide student performance of minimum standards presented in this report were compiled from local district data. Since, therefore, these data represent a diversity of practices, readers are cautioned in making statewide interpretations and generalizations from the data.

Second, while every effort has been extended to insure the accuracy of the original data as well as the summarized data, some error invariably results. This error can occur at the local district level when information is initially compiled, at the Department level when district data is coded for keypunching, in keypunching itself, at the editing stage, during the process of extracting information from computer printouts, or during the process of proofing final report drafts. It is important, therefore, for the reader not to attach undue precision to the findings and to allow for some small margin of error.

Third, and finally, the reader is cautioned against over-emphasizing small differences in any of the findings. Since statistical tests of significance are not applicable to most of the findings, it probably makes sense not to make much of small percentage differences.

SECTION II - EARLY ELEMENTARY (K-3) STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE IN
READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS AND LISTENING

A. 1984-85 Student Performance

Approximately 51,000 early elementary students were evaluated in 308 school districts in reading, writing, mathematics and listening. The percentages of students achieving minimum standards in each skill area are given below:

Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
94%	93%	94%	95%

The percentage of students achieving minimum standards was the same in each skill area, compared to 1983-84. Approximately 48,000 students achieved minimum standards, while around 3200 did not.

B. Grade Level Evaluated

As shown below, over 70% of school districts conducted early elementary testing in grade 3 for each skill area. The next most common testing year was grade 2.

TABLE 1
GRADE LEVEL EVALUATED-EARLY ELEMENTARY

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Reading	<1%	20%	79%
Writing	<1%	14%	86%
Mathematics	<1%	20%	79%
Listening	1%	29%	70%

C. Percentages of Students Exempted/Not Evaluated

The table below contains the percentage of early elementary students exempted/not evaluated according to category - Special Education, Limited English Ability and Other students (e.g. not evaluated because of absenteeism or district transfers). At least 92% of the early elementary students were evaluated in each skill area.

TABLE 2
STUDENTS EXEMPTED/NOT EVALUATED - EARLY ELEMENTARY

	SPECIAL EDUCATION	LIMITED ENGLISH ABILITY	OTHER	TOTAL EXEMPTED/ NOT EVALUATED
Reading	4%	3%	1%	8%
Writing	4%	3%	1%	8%
Mathematics	4%	2%	1%	7%
Listening	3%	3%	1%	7%

SECTION III - LATER ELEMENTARY (4-6) STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE IN READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, AND LISTENING

A. 1984-85 Student Performance

Approximately 54,000 later elementary students were evaluated in 305 school districts in reading, writing, mathematics, and listening. The percentages of students achieving minimum standards in each skill area are given below:

Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
92%	93%	90%	94%

The percentage of students achieving minimum standards was up by 1% compared to 1983-84 except in mathematics where the percentage went down by one point. Approximately 50,000 students achieved minimum standards, while around 4,000 did not.

B. Grade Level Evaluated

As shown in Table 3, the majority of school districts in almost all instances, conducted later elementary testing in grade 5 in each skill area. The next most common testing year was grade 6. Over 40% of the districts evaluated grade 6 students in reading, writing, and mathematics.

TABLE 3
GRADE LEVEL EVALUATED-LATER ELEMENTARY

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Reading	4%	54%	42%
Writing	3%	49%	48%
Mathematics	4%	52%	44%
Listening	14%	55%	32%

C. Percentage of Students Exempted/Not Evaluated

The table below contains the percentage of later elementary students exempted/not evaluated according to category - Special Education, Limited English Ability and Other students (e.g. not evaluated because of absenteeism or district transfers). At least 92% of the later elementary students were evaluated in each skill area.

TABLE 4
STUDENTS EXEMPTED/NOT EVALUATED - LATER ELEMENTARY

	SPECIAL EDUCATION	LIMITED ENGLISH ABILITY	OTHER	TOTAL EXEMPTED/ NOT EVALUATED
Reading	5%	2%	1%	8%
Writing	4%	2%	1%	7%
Mathematics	5%	2%	1%	8%
Listening	4%	2%	1%	7%

SECTION IV - SECONDARY (7-12) STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE IN READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS, AND LISTENING

A. 1984-85 Student Performance

Approximately 69,000 secondary students were evaluated in 271 school districts in reading, writing, mathematics and listening. The percentages of students achieving minimum standards in each skill area are given below:

Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
90%	89%	89%	95%

The percentage of students achieving minimum standards varied slightly compared to 1983-84. The number of students achieving minimum standards in listening went up by one percent and remained the same in all other skill areas. Approximately 62,800 students achieved minimum standards, while around 6400 did not.

B. Grade Level Evaluated

As shown below, over 60% of school districts conducted secondary reading, writing and mathematics testing in grade 8. The next most common testing year for these skills was grade 9. The most common evaluation grade for listening was grade 8 with 49% of the districts testing at that level.

TABLE 5
GRADE LEVEL EVALUATED-SECONDARY

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Reading	11%	62%	27%
Writing	9%	60%	31%
Mathematics	8%	65%	27%
Listening	23%	48%	30%

C. Percentages of Students Exempted/Not Evaluated

The table below contains the percentage of secondary students exempted/not evaluated according to category - Special Education, Limited English Ability and Other students (e.g. not evaluated because of absenteeism or district transfers). At least 90% of the secondary students were evaluated in each skill area.

TABLE 6
STUDENTS EXEMPTED/NOT EVALUATED - SECONDARY

	SPECIAL EDUCATION	LIMITED ENGLISH ABILITY	OTHER	TOTAL EXEMPTED/ NOT EVALUATED
Reading	5%	2%	2%	9%
Writing	4%	2%	3%	9%
Mathematics	5%	2%	2%	9%
Listening	4%	2%	4%	10%

**SECTION V - SECONDARY LEVEL FINAL EVALUATION OF
PERFORMANCE IN READING, WRITING, MATHEMATICS AND LISTENING**

The Basic Skills Improvement Policy requires that each district report on "...the number and percentage of students who have completed eleventh or twelfth grade and who have and have not achieved minimum standards." Since local districts had a choice of grades 7, 8 or 9 as the initial evaluation grade and grades 11 or 12 as the final reporting year, final evaluation will not involve all school districts until 1985-86. In 1984-85, approximately 239 districts submitted final evaluation reports in reading, writing and mathematics. Final evaluation reports for listening were submitted by 51 districts. These reporting districts had the characteristics listed below:

**TABLE 7
DISTRICTS INVOLVED IN FINAL EVALUATION**

Initial Grade Level Evaluated	Final Reporting Grade
7	11
8	11
8	12
9	11
9	12

The percentages of students achieving minimum standards by 1984/85 in the final evaluation reports are given below:

Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
98%	98%	98%	98%

In districts involved in final evaluation, 98% of the students achieved minimum standards in all skill areas by the final reporting year. Six to seven percent of the students in these districts were either exempted or not evaluated in reading, writing and mathematics. In the districts that submitted final evaluation reports for listening, sixteen percent of the students were either exempted or not evaluated. In reading, writing and mathematics, special education exemptions accounted for approximately one half of those students exempted or not evaluated. In listening, "other" exemptions accounted for approximately two thirds of those students exempted or not evaluated.

TABLE 7A
COMPARISON OF INITIAL SECONDARY AND FINAL EVALUATION RESULTS

	Initial Secondary Evaluation Average % Achieving Minimum Standards for 3-Year Period 1980-1983	Final Evaluation % Achieving Minimum Standards 1984-85
READING	89%	98%
WRITING	88%	98%
MATHEMATICS	89%	98%

Column 1 in Table 7A shows an average percent achieving minimum standards for students who were initially evaluated at the secondary level between 1980 and 1983. Column 2 shows the average percent achieving minimum standards for final evaluation for the majority of the students included in Column 1. While performance data from previous years may represent a slightly different population from those included in this year's final evaluation reports (due to transfers, drop-outs, etc.), in most instances, the students are the same. Comparing 1984-85 performance data with previous years' initial secondary level evaluation results shows an increase of nine to ten percentage points in all skill areas.

SECTION VI - POPULATION DIFFERENCES

School districts are required to report performance data for their basic skills program by sex and race/ethnicity. These data are summarized below for 1984-85 and for the five years the Basic Skills Improvement Program has been in effect.

A. Student Performance Data by Sex

1984-1985

At all grade levels, a slightly higher percentage (51%) of the students evaluated were boys. The tables below provide the percentage achieving minimum standards categorized by sex, for all grade levels and skills.

TABLE B
STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA BY SEX

Early Elementary

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Males	93%	91%	93%	95%
Females	95%	95%	94%	95%

Later Elementary

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Males	91%	90%	89%	94%
Females	93%	95%	91%	94%

Secondary

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Males	89%	86%	88%	95%
Females	91%	93%	89%	95%

In reading and mathematics some small, but consistent, differences existed between the passing percentages of males and females. Female students achieved minimum standards in mathematics at a rate 2% higher than males at the later elementary level, and 1 point higher at the other grade levels. Reading passing rates were 2 percentage points higher for females at each grade level. Listening results for males and females were identical at each grade level.

Results for writing tests show a larger difference between males and females that increased at the secondary level. The passing rate for females was 4 points higher at the early elementary level, 5 points higher at the later elementary level, and grew to 7 points higher at the secondary level.

Five-Year Comparison of Performance Data by Sex

In all grade levels and skill areas, in each of the five years the Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been in effect, females achieved minimum standards at a rate equal to or above that of males. The tables below summarize the differences between male and female performance during the Five-year period:

TABLE 9
FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA BY SEX

Early Elementary

	Reading		Writing		Mathematics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1980/81	91%	94%	86%	92%	93%	94%
1981/82	91%	93%	89%	94%	92%	93%
1982/83	92%	94%	90%	94%	94%	94%
1983/84	93%	95%	90%	95%	94%	95%
1984/85	93%	95%	91%	95%	93%	94%

Later Elementary

	Reading		Writing		Mathematics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1980/81	90%	92%	86%	93%	88%	91%
1981/82	90%	92%	88%	94%	88%	91%
1982/83	91%	93%	89%	95%	90%	92%
1983/84	90%	93%	90%	95%	91%	92%
1984/85	91%	93%	90%	95%	89%	91%

Secondary

	Reading		Writing		Mathematics	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
1980/81	87%	91%	81%	92%	88%	89%
1981/82	87%	90%	83%	93%	88%	89%
1982/83	88%	91%	86%	94%	88%	89%
1983/84	89%	91%	85%	94%	88%	89%
1984/85	89%	91%	86%	93%	88%	89%

The data show a consistent pattern of results over the five-year period. Slight differences existed among the grade levels in all skill areas except in secondary writing where the gap between male and female performance averaged almost 9 points over the five years. Although a clear trend has not been established, the writing gap was smaller in 1984/85 than in 1980/81 at all grade levels.

Final Evaluation Results by Sex

Final evaluation data show little difference between the percentage of males and females achieving minimum standards by the end of 11th or 12th grade.

TABLE 10
FINAL EVALUATION BY SEX

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Males	98%	98%	98%	98%
Females	99%	99%	98%	98%

B. Student Performance Data by Race/Ethnicity

1984/85

Early Elementary

The racial/ethnic composition of the approximately 51,000 early elementary students evaluated was as follows:

White	87%
Black	7%
Hispanic	4%
Other	2%

Figure 1 presents the 1984/85 performance data by racial/ethnic categories. Hispanic students improved their passing percentages at least 3 point in all skill areas between 1983/84 and 1984/85 except in mathematics. In mathematics, all racial/ethnic groups, except "Others", had a passing percentage at least 1 point lower than 1983/84. Compared to 1983/84, the performance of white students was the same in all skill areas, except in mathematics.

White students had the highest percentage achieving minimum standards in listening. "Other" students had the highest passing rate in reading and mathematics.

The gap among the racial/ethnic groups was greatest in reading and smallest in writing and listening. The highest and lowest passing rates in writing and listening differed by 6 percentage points, while in reading, this difference was 12 points.

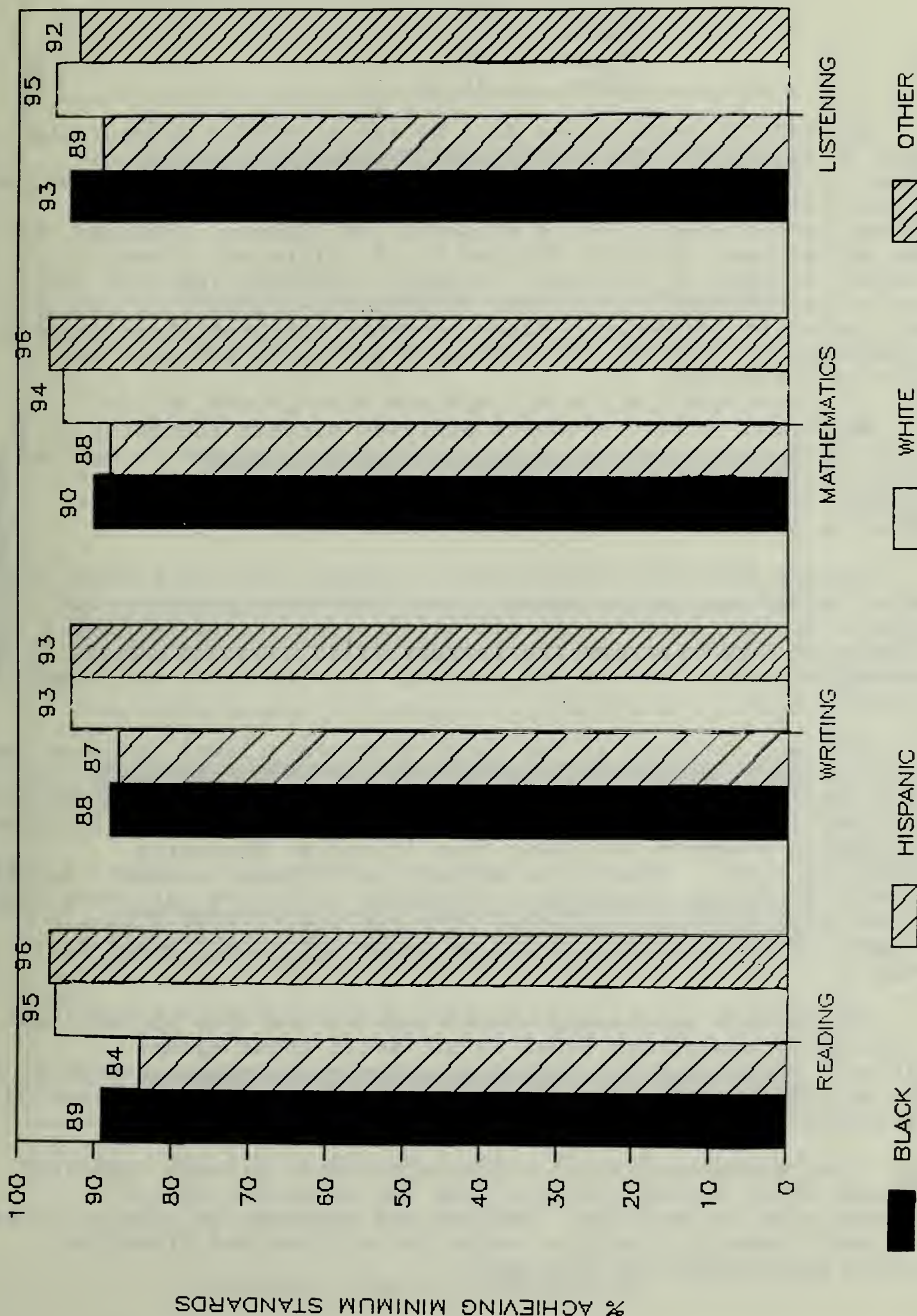
Hispanic students consistently had the lowest percentage achieving minimum standards among the racial/ethnic categories. The failure rate for Hispanic students was about double that of white students in mathematics, writing and listening, and around triple that of whites in reading.

The percentage of Black students failing to achieve minimum standards was greater than that of whites and lower than that of Hispanic students. The failure rate for Black students was double that of White students in reading and slightly less than double in mathematics and writing. The passing rate of "Other" students was within 3 percentage points of that of White students in all skill areas.

FIGURE 1

1984/85 PERFORMANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

EARLY ELEMENTARY



Later Elementary

The distribution of the racial/ethnic categories of the approximately 54,000 later elementary students evaluated was as follows:

White	89%
Black	6%
Hispanic	3%
Other	2%

The 1984/85 performance data by racial/ethnic category is shown in Figure 2. The passing rates for all racial/ethnic groups were greater than or equal to their performance in 1983/84 in all skill areas except mathematics. In mathematics, the passing percentages of White students and "Others" remained the same while black students dropped by 10 points and hispanic students dropped by 5 points. Hispanic students improved their passing percentages by 8 points in reading, 5 points in writing and 1 point in listening. Black students improved their passing percentages by 3 points in reading, 5 points in writing, and 1 point in listening.

White and "Other" students achieved minimum standards at a higher rate than students in the other racial/ethnic categories in all skill areas. As compared to White students, "Other" students had a 2% higher passing rate in mathematics and 1% higher in writing.

The gap among the racial/ethnic groups with the highest and lowest scores was larger among later elementary students than early elementary students in all skill areas except reading. Mathematics scores showed the largest difference - a gap of 17 percentage points between the passing rates of Other and Black students.

Hispanic students at the later elementary level achieved the lowest passing percentage among the racial/ethnic groups in all skill areas except mathematics, in which "Black" students scored the lowest. In all skill areas except writing, the passing rate of Hispanic students was lower than it was at the early elementary level. Twenty two percent of Hispanic students failed to achieve minimum standards in reading, a failure rate more than 3 times that of White students. The failure rate of Hispanic students was 12% in writing and at least 20% in all other skill areas.

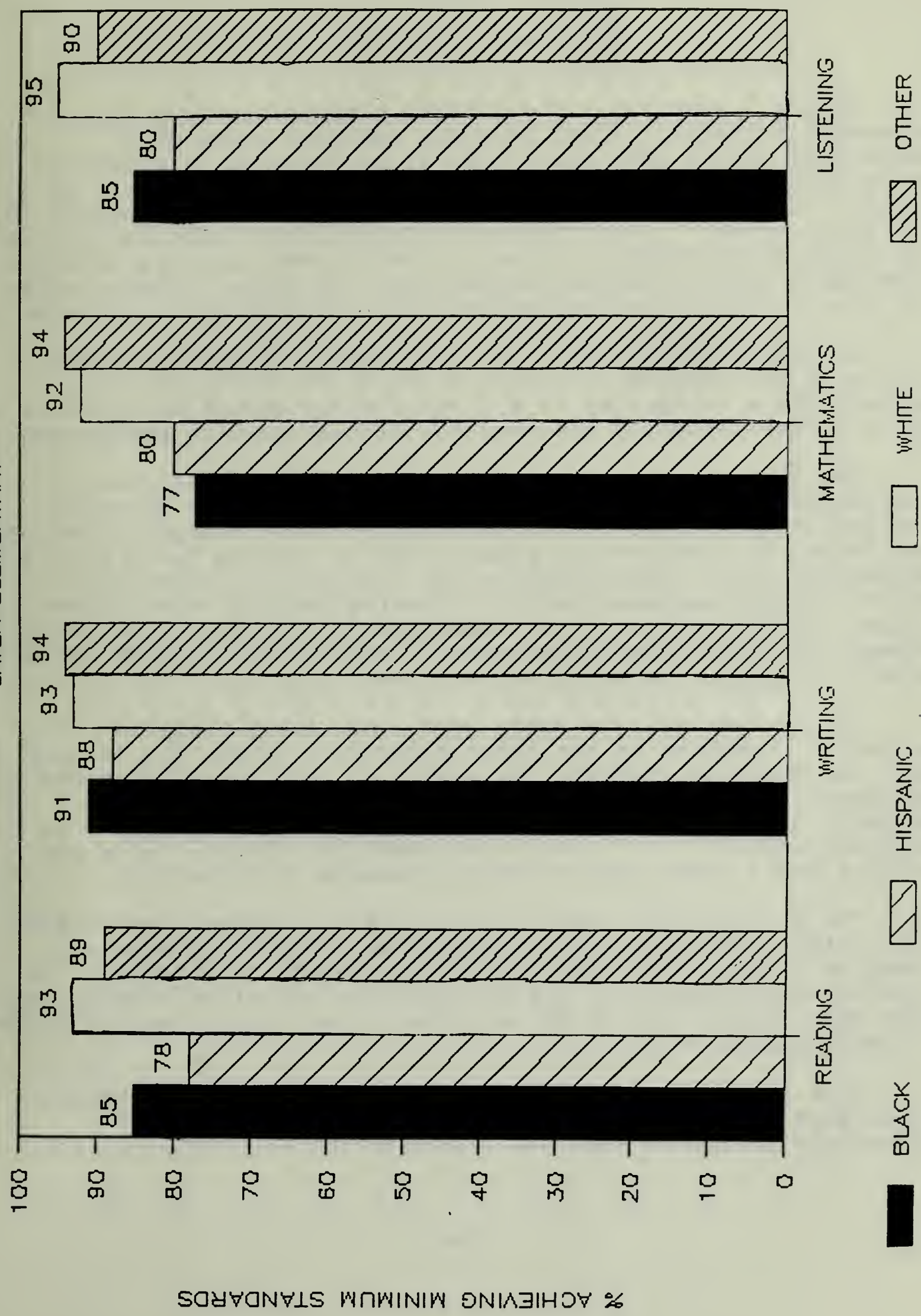
The failure rate among Black students was also higher than at the early elementary level in all skill areas except writing. Black students failed to achieve minimum standards at a rate slightly more than double that of White students in reading, and almost triple in mathematics and listening.

Later elementary White students achieved minimum standards at rates which varied slightly from the rates for early elementary White students. Reading and mathematics passing rates were each lower by 2 points, while the writing and listening passing percentage were the same.

1984/85 PERFORMANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

FIGURE 2

LATER ELEMENTARY



Secondary

The approximately 69,000 secondary students evaluated were distributed by racial/ethnic categories as follows:

White	90%
Black	5%
Hispanic	3%
Other	2%

Figure 3 summarizes the 1984/85 performance data for secondary students. Black students recorded gains of 2 percentage points over their 1983/84 performance in all skill areas except listening where their passing rate was lower by 2 points. Hispanic students improved their passing percentage in all skill areas. "Other" students raised their passing rate in all skill areas except writing, in which their passing rate was lower by 4 points. Passing percentages for white students were the same or within one percentage point of last year's figures.

At the secondary level, White students achieved minimum standards at a higher rate than students in the other racial/ethnic categories in all skill areas except mathematics in which "Other" students achieved the highest passing percentage.

The difference in passing rates among the racial/ethnic categories varied somewhat from the later elementary figures. The gap between the highest (White) and lowest (Hispanic) scores was larger by 2 percentage points (17) in reading and 3 points in mathematics (9), and was smaller by 7 points in listening (8). While reading, mathematics and listening passing rates showed the largest difference among the racial/ethnic groups at the later elementary level, the differences in the reading and mathematics passing rates of secondary students were similar.

The highest failure rates were again among Hispanic students. Compared to the later elementary level, the failure rate for Hispanic students was higher in reading, writing and mathematics and lower in listening. The failure rate for Hispanic students was almost double that of White students in writing, almost 2 1/2 times in mathematics, almost triple in reading and 4 times that of White students in listening.

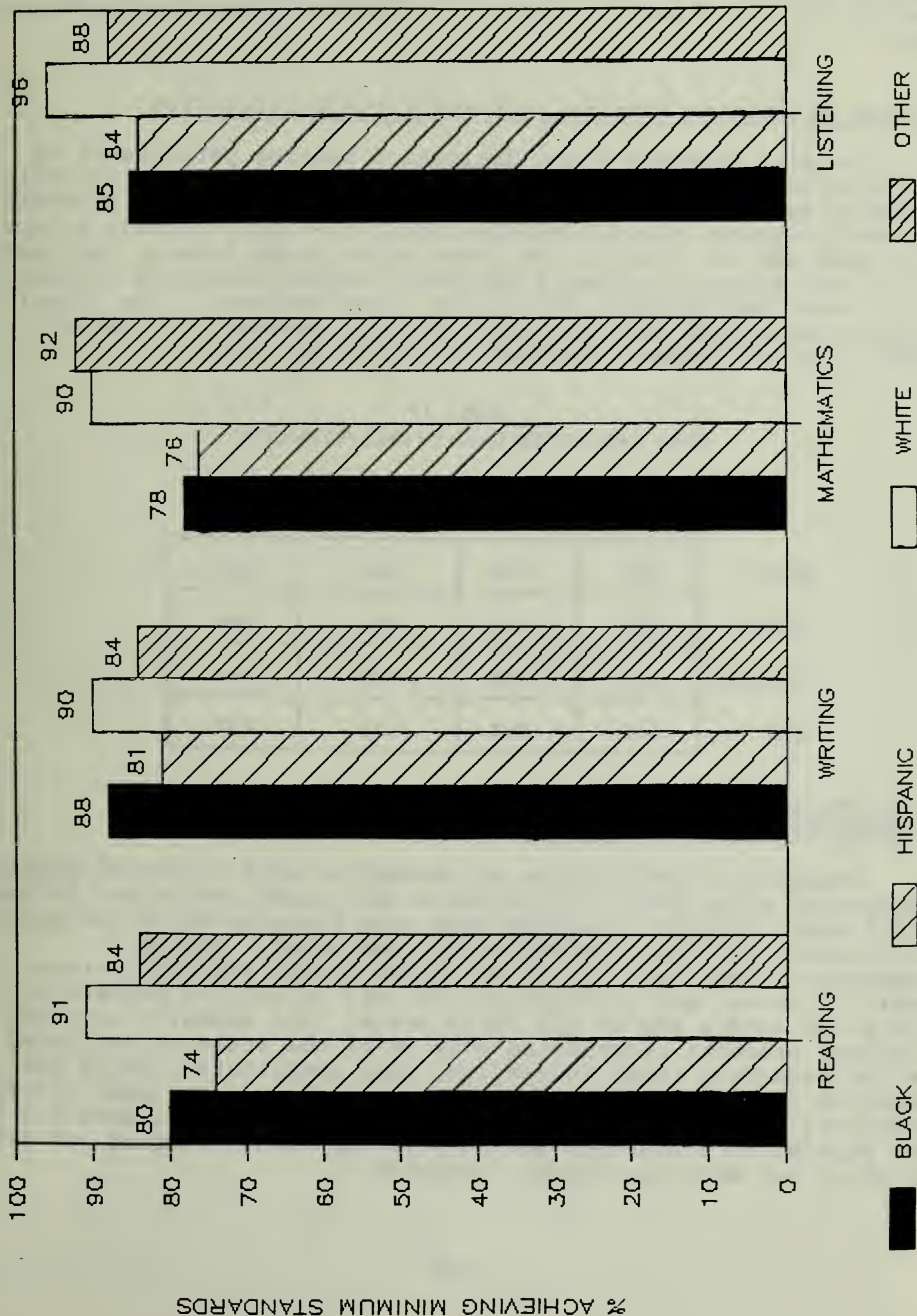
The failure rate among secondary Black students was higher than later elementary Black students in reading and writing, lower by 1 point in mathematics and the same in listening. In reading and mathematics, the failure rate for Black students was more than double that of White students, and in listening, almost 4 times higher.

With the exception of listening, White students recorded a lower passing rate than at either the later or the early elementary level.

FIGURE 3

1984/85 PERFORMANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

SECONDARY



Five-Year Comparison of Performance Data by Race/Ethnicity

Results for the five-year period the Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been in effect indicate a consistent pattern of higher failure rates among minority students across the state. The graphs in Figures 4, 5 and 6 summarize these data.

Final Evaluation Results by Racial/Ethnic Categories

Table 11 presents final evaluation passing percentages by racial/ethnic categories. Although a higher percentage of White students achieved minimum standards (99%) by the end of eleventh or twelfth grade, the differences among the racial/ethnic groups were much smaller than at the three other grade levels. At least 92% of the Hispanic students achieved minimum standards in each skill area, and at least 92% of the Black students. The lowest passing rates were for Black and Hispanic students in reading (92%), and for "Other" students in listening (92%).

TABLE 11
FINAL EVALUATION DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY

	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Listening
Blacks	92%	95%	93%	93%
Whites	99%	99%	99%	99%
Hispanics	92%	94%	94%	93%
Other	94%	96%	97%	92%

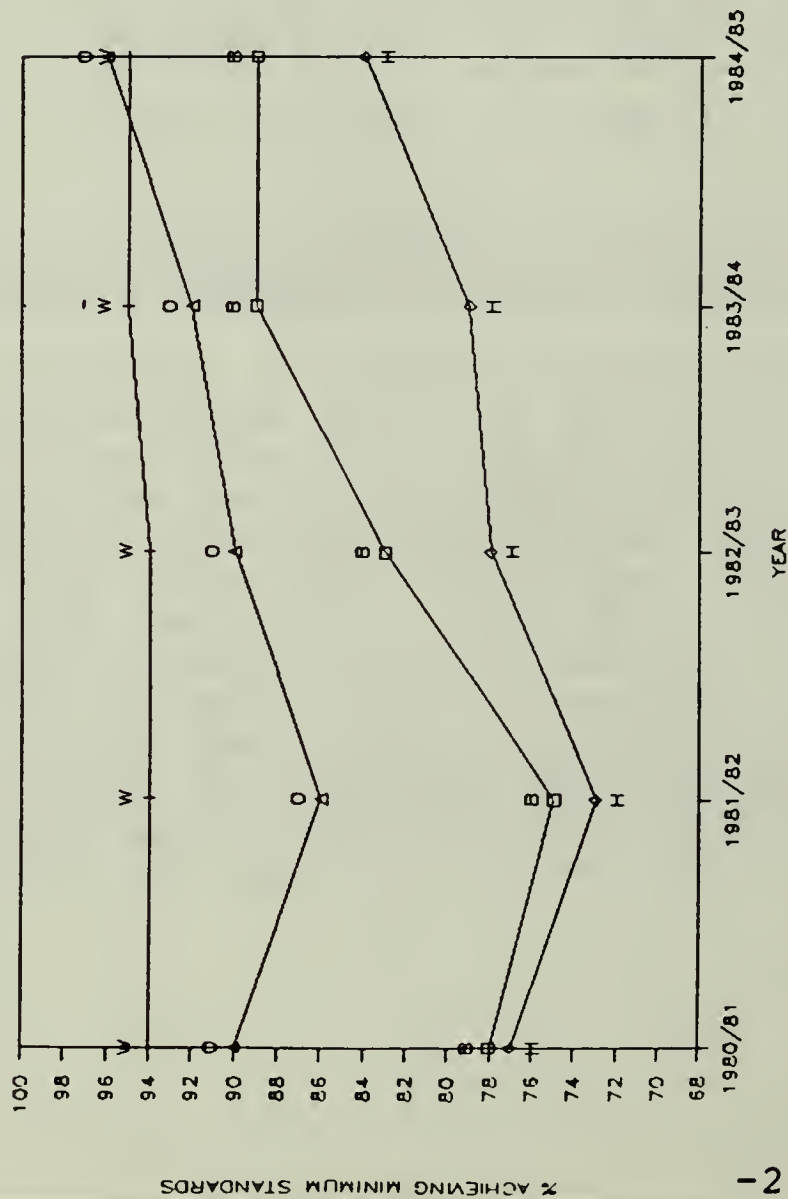
Percentage of Students Not Meeting Standards and Exempted Compared to Racial/Ethnic Distribution

Analysis of performance and exemption data by racial/ethnic categories shows that, in 1984/85 at all grade levels and in each skill area, minority students were over-represented in the group of students failing or exempted/not evaluated. Figure 7 summarizes these data across all grade levels and skill areas. Table 12 shows that this pattern existed in varying degrees at all grade levels and in all skill areas. For example, although Hispanic students represented only 3% of the students evaluated at the secondary level in reading, they constituted 17% of the exempted students and 7% of the students who did not meet minimum standards. In contrast, White students at this level were 91% of the population evaluated, but only 63% of those exempted and 80% of those not meeting minimum standards.

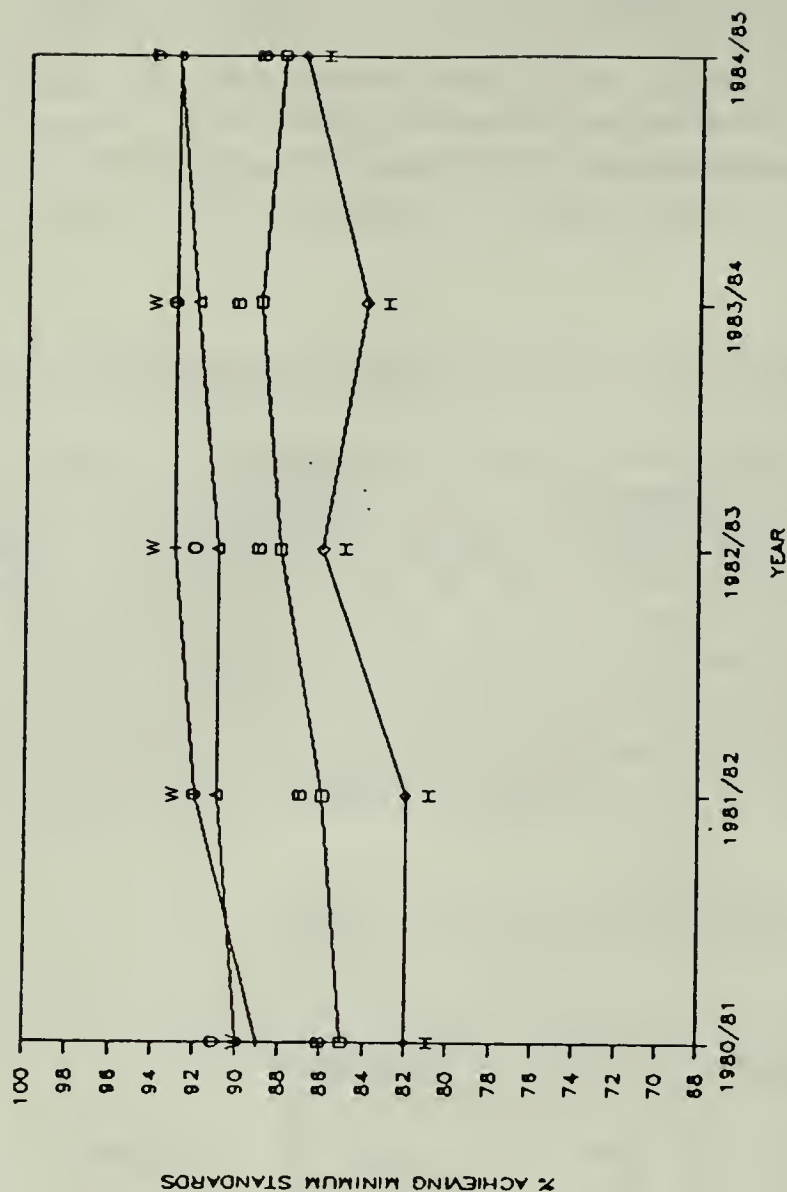
Data from the past two years showed very slight variation in these figures. Over the past three years, Black, Hispanic and Other students represented a disproportionate percentage of those students not meeting standards as well as those exempted or not evaluated. This pattern documents a consistent trend of excessive numbers of minority students either failing to meet standards or not being evaluated.

FIGURE 4
FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY
EARLY ELEMENTARY

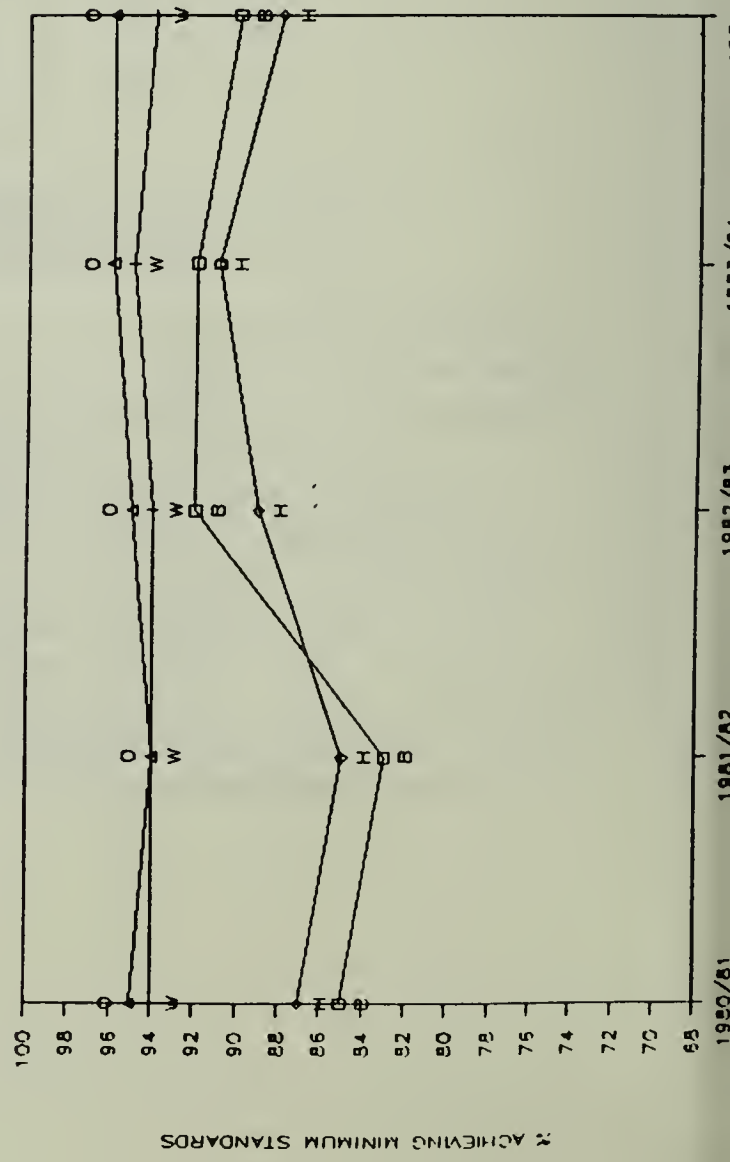
READING



WRITING



MATHEMATICS



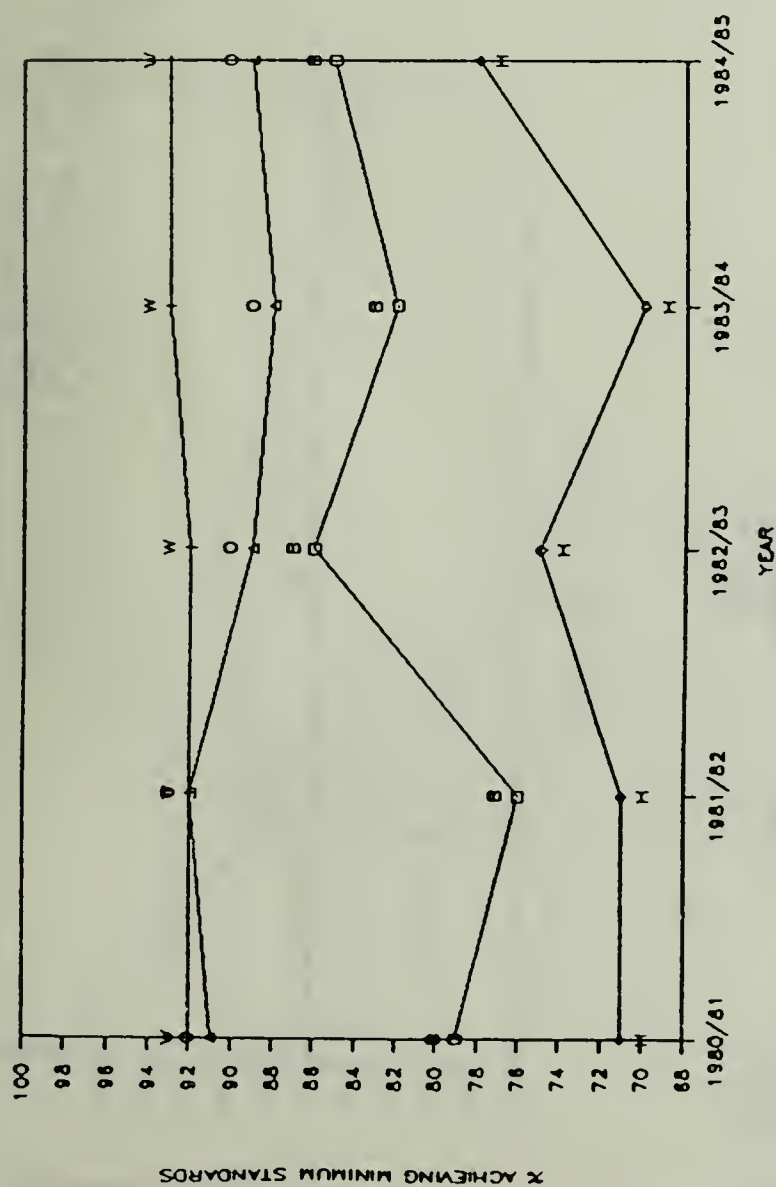
* Except for White students in mathematics, the passing percentages of all racial/ethnic groups were higher in 1984/85 than in the first year of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy (1980/81).

* Over the past five years, the gap between the performance of Black students and that of the highest achieving racial/ethnic group decreased in reading and mathematics and remained the same in writing.

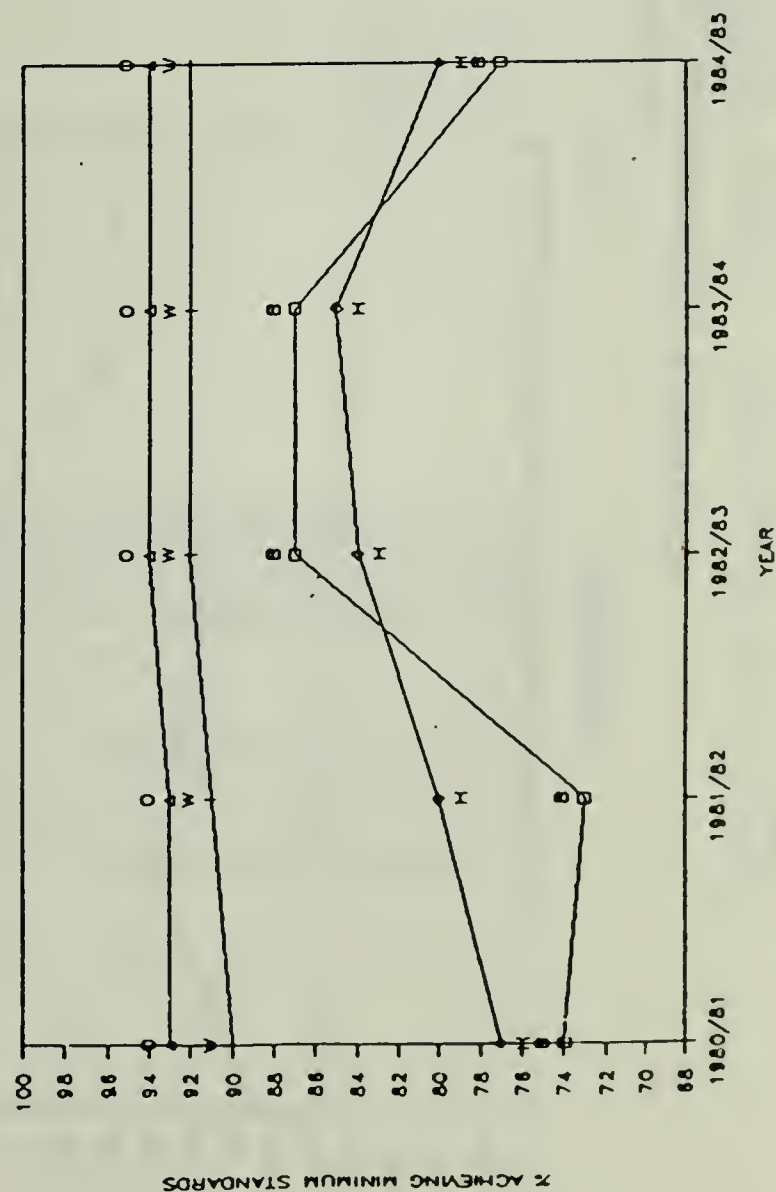
* "Other" students had the highest percentage achieving minimum standards in reading and mathematics and, along with White students, the highest percentage in writing.

FIGURE 5
FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY
LATER ELEMENTARY

READING



MATHEMATICS



* Except for "Other" students in reading, the passing percentages of all racial/ethnic groups were higher in 1984/85 than in the first year of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy (1980/81).

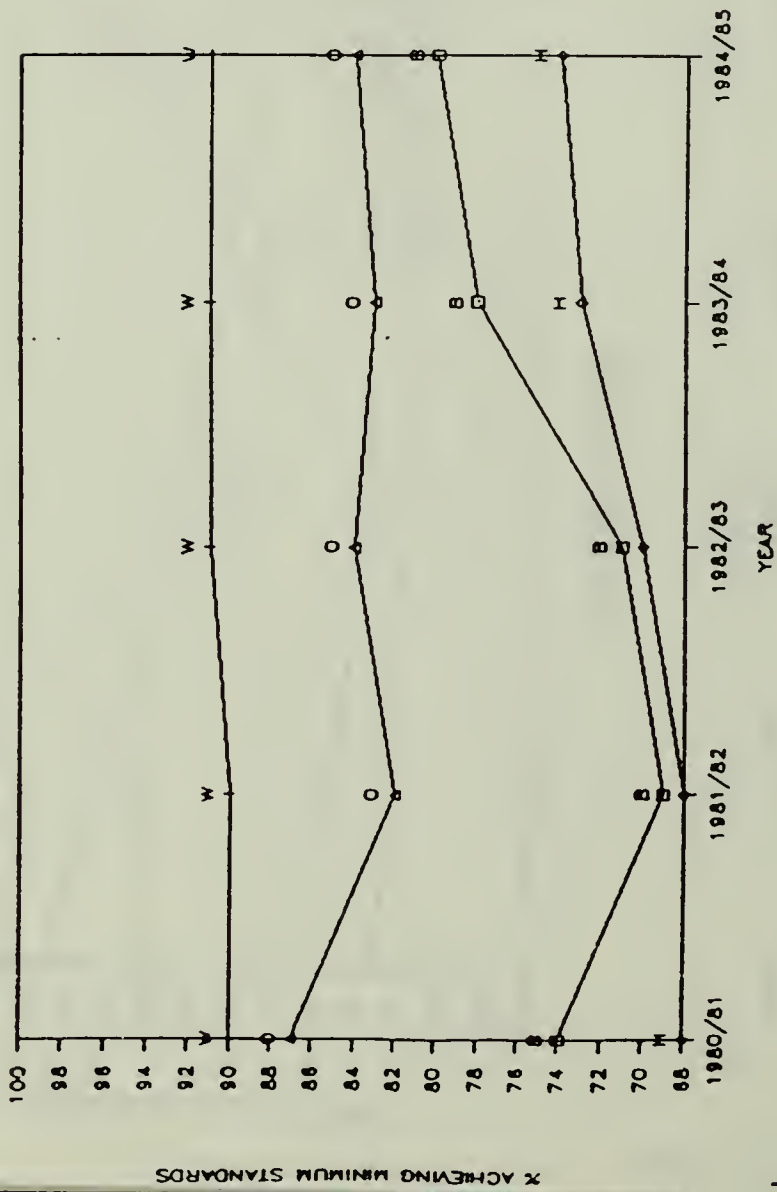
* The passing percentages of Black students in all skill areas were higher in 1984/85 than in 1980/81.

* Over the past five years, the gap between the performance of Hispanic students and that of the highest achieving racial/ethnic group decreased in all skill areas.

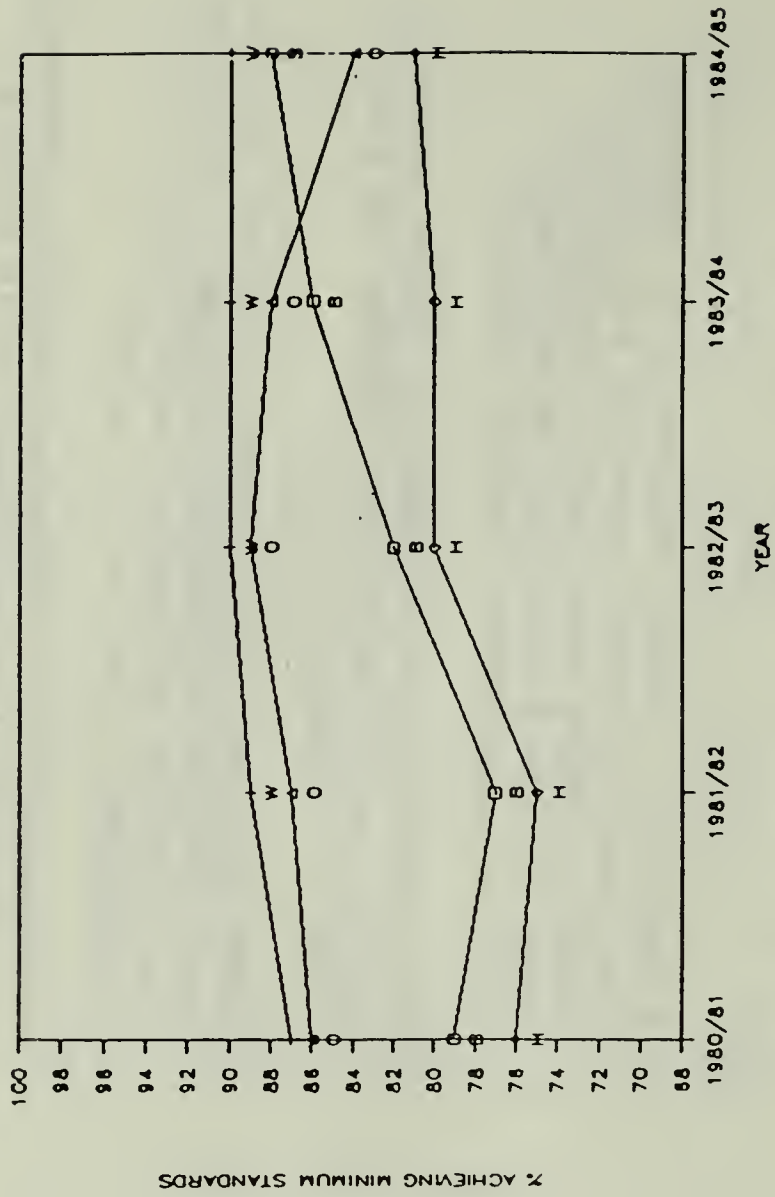
* Although Black students' passing percentage in mathematics was lower by 10 points compared to 1983/84, their performance gained with respect to the highest achieving racial/ethnic group in all skill areas over the past five years.

FIGURE 6
FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY
SECONDARY

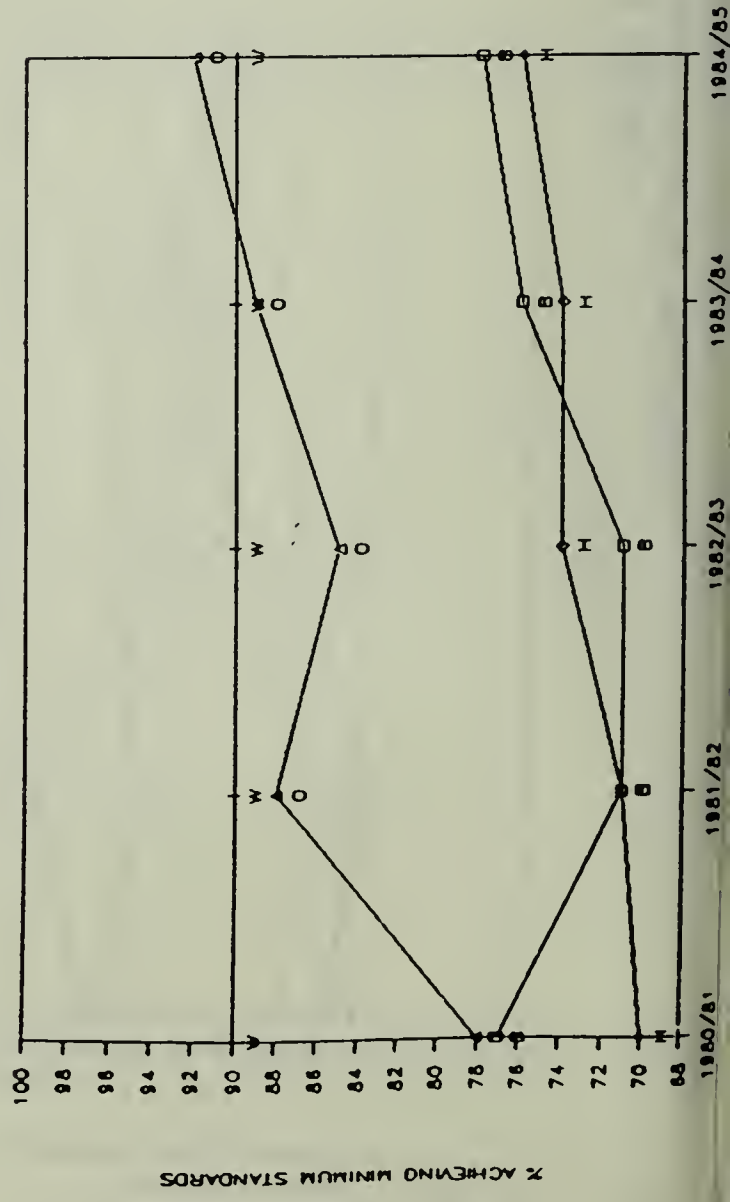
READING



WRITING



MATHEMATICS



* Except for White students, whose passing percentages remained the same in mathematics, the passing percentage of all racial/ethnic groups were higher in 1984/85 than in the first year of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy (1980/81).

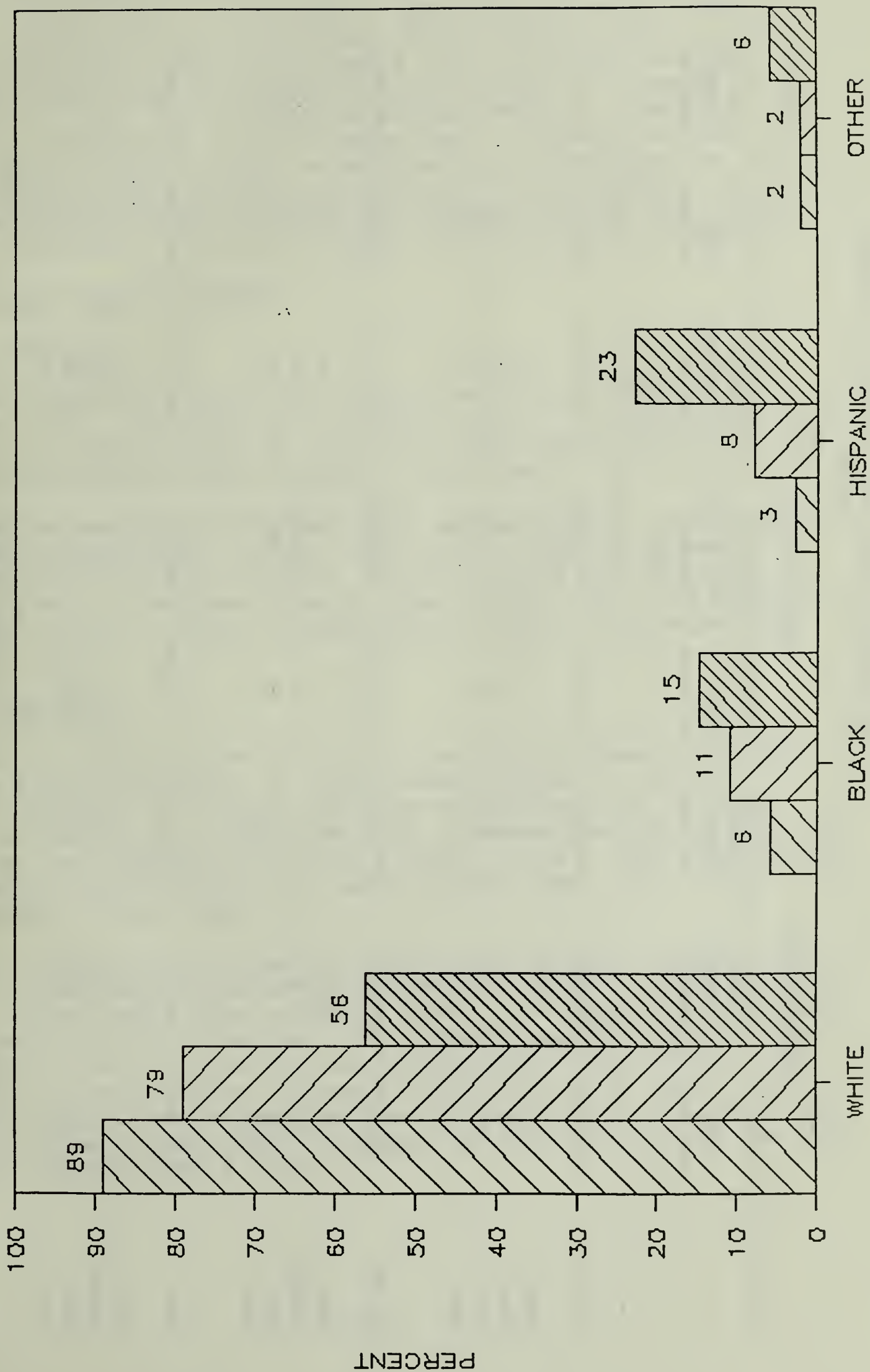
* Over the past five years, the gap between the performance of Hispanic students and that of the highest achieving racial/ethnic group decreased in all skill areas.

* Over the past five years, the gap between the performance of Black students and that of the highest achieving racial/ethnic group decreased in all skill areas.

FIGURE 7

1984/85 RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

OF STUDENTS



% OF EVAL'D POP.
 % OF FAILING POP.
 % EXEMPT/NOT EVAL'D

TABLE 12

RACIAL/ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS EVALUATED,
NOT MEETING STANDARDS AND EXEMPTED/NOT EVALUATED

1984/85

EARLY ELEMENTARY				LATER ELEMENTARY				SECONDARY			
	Total Evaluated %	Students Not Meeting Standards %	Students Exempted/ Not Eval. %	Total Evaluated %	Students Not Meeting Standards %	Students Exempted/ Not Eval. %		Total Evaluated %	Students Not Meeting Standards %	Students Exempted/ Not Eval. %	
READING	(n=51,534)	(n=3,074)	(n=4,450)	(n=54,647)	(n=4,384)	(n=4,519)	(n=69,386)	(n=7,086)	(n=6,591)		
Black	6	12	14	6	11	17	5	10	14		
Hispanic	4	11	29	3	9	23	3	8	17		
White	88	76	51	89	77	54	90	80	62		
Other	2	1	5	2	3	6	2	2	6		
WRITING	(n=51,117)	(n=3,688)	(n=4,509)	(n=54,405)	(n=3,896)	(n=4,754)	(n=69,360)	(n=7,358)	(n=7,167)		
Black	6	10	15	5	7	16	5	5	13		
Hispanic	4	7	29	3	5	24	3	5	16		
White	88	80	51	89	86	54	90	87	64		
Other	2	2	6	2	2	6	2	3	5		
MATH	(n=51,925)	(n=3,320)	(n=3,813)	(n=54,818)	(n=5,217)	(n=4,337)	(n=70,025)	(n=7,766)	(n=6,541)		
Black	6	10	15	6	13	18	5	10	15		
Hispanic	5	9	26	4	8	22	3	6	17		
White	87	80	54	88	77	56	90	83	61		
Other	2	1	4	2	1	4	2	1	5		
LISTENING	(n=51,779)	(n=2,599)	(n=4,250)	(n=54,083)	(n=3,381)	(n=4,075)	(n=68,061)	(n=3,160)	(n=7,365)		
Black	7	9	13	6	13	16	5	16	18		
Hispanic	4	9	32	3	11	24	3	10	16		
White	88	79	48	89	73	53	90	69	60		
Other	2	3	8	2	3	7	2	4	6		

SECTION VII - TEST AND STANDARDS

Since local districts select the evaluation instruments and determine the passing standards, a wide variety of tests and passing scores exist among the approximately 309 school districts. Tables 13 - 15 summarize the tests used and the standards established at each grade level and for each skill area. No standards for writing tests are included, because holistic scoring, used by most districts, does not provide uniform scores that can be used to compute means. Holistic scoring is a judgmental rating system used to score writing samples. The derived scores, as well as the standards set on the basis of these scores, are not comparable from one district to another because of different scoring systems and the fact that scores are relative to the particular writing samples rated.

A. 1984/85 Test and Standards

Early Elementary

No one reading or math test dominated at the early elementary level. In writing, however, 77% of the districts used a local test. Local tests in listening were administered by 32% of the districts and Project Signals instruments by another 25%.

Standards set by local districts varied widely according to the evaluation instrument used. Districts established mean passing standards of 70% or above in reading on the Stanford Diagnostic Test; in mathematics on local tests; and in listening on the local tests, Project Signals tests and the Metropolitan Achievement Test.

Later Elementary

The most commonly used tests at the later elementary level followed a pattern similar to those administered in early elementary grades. No single reading or mathematics test was used by a majority of school districts. Seventy-eight percent of the writing tests administered were local tests. The most widely used listening instruments were again local tests (32%) and Project Signals tests (25%).

Similar variation in passing standards existed at the later elementary level as at the early elementary level. However, the standards established were slightly lower. No reading tests had mean standards of 70% or above; the highest mean standards were set for STEP (67%) and the Stanford Diagnostic Test (68%). In mathematics, several tests had mean standards at or above 60% - local tests (66%), Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (66%), and STEP (64%). The highest mean standard on listening tests was for the Project Signals tests (73%).

Secondary

The tests administered at the secondary level were generally different instruments from those used at the two elementary levels. Over 75% of the districts use state tests in each skill area. Local tests, commonly used at the elementary levels, were only 1% of the reading tests, 2% of the mathematics tests, 18% of the writing tests and 0% of the listening tests. Table 15 lists the tests and standards used at the secondary level.

Districts using local tests established the highest mean standards in reading and math; however, these average standards were based on only 3 and 4 districts respectively. Listening standards were highest on the state test, used by 98% of the districts.

TABLE 13
EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND STANDARDS - EARLY ELEMENTARY

READING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
California Achievement Test 1977-82	52	17	54
Local Test	45	15	65
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	46	15	47
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	35	12	53
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1977-78	19	6	53
Stanford Diagnostic Test 1976	15	5	73
SRA Achievement Test 1978-79	17	6	49
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-74	6	2	56
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1973-75	9	3	55
Stanford Achievement Test 1978-83	27	9	57
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	6	2	63
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>27</u>	<u>9</u>	62
TOTALS	304	100%	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 5px;"> Statewide Mean Standard - 56 Statewide Median Standards - 54 </div>			

TABLE 13 (Cont'd.)

EARLY ELEMENTARY (K-3) - WRITING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	221	76	N/A
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	24	8	N/A
California Achievement Test 1977-82	16	5	N/A
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	6	2	N/A
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1978-79	5	2	N/A
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>	N/A
TOTALS	291	100%	

TABLE 13 (Cont'd.)

EARLY ELEMENTARY (K-3) - MATHEMATICS

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	66	22	72
California Achievement Test 1977-82	53	17	45
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	40	13	48
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	2	1	60
SRA Achievement Test 1978-79	15	5	47
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-74	8	3	47
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1978	16	6	49
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1973-75	11	4	67
Stanford Achievement Test 1978-83	27	9	51
Stanford Diagnostic Test 1976-77	7	2	67
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	6	2	64
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>53</u>	<u>17</u>	53
TOTALS	304	100%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 55 Statewide Median Standard - 55			

TABLE 13 (Cont'd.)

EARLY ELEMENTARY (K-3) - LISTENING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	97	32	70
Project Signals 1982	78	26	72
Stanford Achievement Test 1981-82	46	15	57
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	20	7	62
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-78	9	3	55
Circus 1979	5	2	68
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1977-78	9	3	74
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>38</u>	<u>13</u>	58
TOTALS	305	100%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 66 Statewide Median Standard - 68			

NOTE: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 14
EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND STANDARDS - LATER ELEMENTARY

READING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
California Achievement Test 1977-82	51	17	50
Local Test	43	14	66
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	44	15	43
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	36	12	51
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1977-78	19	6	52
Stanford Diagnostic Test 1976-78	15	5	68
SRA Achievement Test 1978-79	17	6	47
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-74	5	2	45
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1973-75	10	3	48
Stanford Achievement Test 1978-83	28	9	51
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	6	2	67
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>26</u>	<u>9</u>	60
TOTALS	300	100%	
<div> Statewide Mean Standard - 53 Statewide Median Standard - 51 </div>			

TABLE 14 (Cont'd.)

LATER ELEMENTARY (4-6) - WRITING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	222	77	N/A
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	18	6	N/A
California Achievement Test 1977-82	14	5	N/A
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	6	2	N/A
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1978-79	5	2	N/A
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	N/A
TOTALS	287	100%	

TABLE 14 (Cont'd.)

LATER ELEMENTARY (4-6) - MATHEMATICS

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	66	22	66
California Achievement Test 1977-82	54	18	44
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978-82	38	12	43
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	36	12	50
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-74	8	3	45
SRA Achievement Test 1978-79	16	5	44
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1978	15	5	49
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1973-75	11	4	66
Stanford Achievement Test 1978-83	26	9	46
Stanford Diagnostic Test 1976	7	2	56
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	7	2	64
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>16</u>	<u>5</u>	53
TOTALS	300	101%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 52 Statewide Median Standard - 50			

TABLE 14 (Cont'd.)

LATER ELEMENTARY (4-6) - LISTENING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
Local Test	91	31	69
Project Signals 1982	77	26	73
Sequential Tests of Educational Progress 1979	28	9	59
Stanford Achievement Test 1981-82	46	15	58
Stanford Achievement Test 1972-78	9	3	47
Metropolitan Achievement Test 1978	7	2	76
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>24</u>	<u>8</u>	59
TOTALS	297	98%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 66 Statewide Median Standard - 68			

NOTE: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE 15
EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND STANDARDS - SECONDARY

READING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
State Test	199	76	63
California Achievement Test 1977-78	16	6	47
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	13	5	54
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978	8	3	44
Local Test	3	1	64
Miscellaneous Standardized Tests	<u>23</u>	<u>9</u>	52
TOTALS	262	99	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 5px;"> Statewide Mean Standard - 60 Statewide Median Standard 60 </div>			

WRITING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
State Test	205	79	N/A
Local Test	44	17	N/A
Miscellaneous	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>	N/A
TOTALS	258	100%	

TABLE 15 (Cont'd.)

SECONDARY (7-12) - MATHEMATICS

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
State Test	204	78	60
California Achievement Test 1977-78	17	6	44
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills 1981-82	6	2	49
Iowa Test of Basic Skills 1978	8	3	42
Local Test	4	2	61
Miscellaneous	<u>23</u>	<u>9</u>	46
TOTALS	262	101%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 57 Statewide Median Standard - 59			

LISTENING

Evaluation Instrument	# Districts	% Districts	Mean Standard
State Test	256	97	66
Miscellaneous	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	61
TOTALS	263	100%	
Statewide Mean Standard - 66 Statewide Median Standard - 68			

NOTE: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

B. Five Year Comparison of Minimum Standards

Over the five-year period the Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been in effect, the mean standard has changed somewhat at all levels. Table 16 summarizes these changes.

TABLE 16
MEAN STANDARDS - 1980/81 AND 1984/85

	READING		MATHEMATICS	
	1980/81	1984/85	1980/81	1984/85
EARLY ELEMENTARY	57	56	56	55
LATER ELEMENTARY	54	53	53	52
SECONDARY	59	60	56	57

These shifts in minimum standards occur as the result of districts changing their standards. Table 17 shows the number of districts that have raised or lowered standards over the five years. The figures represent only those districts using the same tests over the five-year period and include only changes of at least 5 percentage points.

TABLE 17
CHANGES IN MINIMUM STANDARDS
1980/81 AND 1984/85

	READING		MATHEMATICS	
	# of districts		# of districts	
	Lowering	Raising	Lowering	Raising
EARLY ELEMENTARY	59	82	61	72
LATER ELEMENTARY	57	68	50	65
SECONDARY	15	33	16	45

Changes in minimum standards have occurred more often at the elementary levels than at the secondary level.

SECTION VIII - COMPARISONS OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A. Kind of Community Analysis

The performance results from individual school districts were grouped by four categories of cities and towns referred to as Kind of Community (KOC). This KOC classification assigns each school district in Massachusetts into one of four groupings organized on the basis of family income level, size, degree of industrialization, type of community (urban, suburban, rural), and income. The four KOC's are as follows:

KOC 1: Big Cities generally refer to communities designated as central cities according to the 1970 United States Census. Examples of Massachusetts big cities include Brockton, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Worcester.

KOC 2: Industrial Suburbs generally include three types of communities; suburbs in the inner Boston circle with below average family income and with more than 20% commercial and 7% industrial land use; suburbs in the outer Boston circle with below average family income and with more than 20% commercial land use; and suburbs of central cities other than Boston with below average family income and with more than 20% commercial and 7% industrial land use. Examples of industrial suburbs are Cambridge, Chelsea, Medford, Quincy, Peabody, Waltham, Lee and Monson.

KOC 3: Residential Suburbs generally fall into three categories: suburbs of Boston (not industrial suburbs) with average family incomes up to \$16,000; suburbs of Boston (not industrial suburbs) with average family incomes over \$16,000; and suburbs of central cities other than Boston with above average family incomes. Examples include Arlington, Braintree, Framingham, Scituate, Walpole, Andover, Dover, Milton, Newton, Chelmsford, Shrewsbury, Wilbraham.

KOC 4: Small Towns and Other Communities generally include the following types: resort towns in the Cape Cod area; resort towns in the Berkshire area; suburbs of cities other than Boston (not industrial suburbs) with less than average family income; towns with below average family income and industrial/commercial land use; towns with below average family income that are non-industrial, non-commercial and non-resort areas; and communities with a population of less than 2,500 inhabitants but not resort areas. Examples of small towns and other communities include Barnstable, Chatham, Yarmouth, Stockbridge, Bridgewater, Hadley, Oxford, Stoughton, Newburyport, Taunton, Ayer, . Kingston, Orange, Webster, Ashfield, Dunstable, . Plympton.

Table 18 provides the performance results by KOC for 1984-85 and for the five-year period the Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been in effect. The figures for 1984-85 followed the same pattern as the previous three years.

Students in KOC 3 (Residential Suburbs) have consistently had a higher percentage of students achieving standards than students in the other three types of communities. The lowest passing rates occurred among students in KOC 1 (big cities). In 1984/85, the difference between the passing rates of these two types of communities averaged 4.3% at the early elementary level, 7.3% at the later elementary and 5.7% at the secondary level.

FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA BY KIND OF COMMUNITY

TABLE 18

READING

	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC
	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85										
KOC 1	86	86	84	82	81	81	87	85	82	89	84	84	91	85	85
KOC 2	92	89	87	96	92	91	94	92	91	96	92	92	95	92	92
KOC 3	96	94	92	96	95	92	95	94	92	96	94	93	96	94	92
KOC 4	94	91	88	94	92	89	95	92	90	95	93	90	94	94	90

WRITING

	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC
	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85										
KOC 1	84	81	84	88	87	84	90	88	87	92	90	87	91	92	87
KOC 2	91	92	88	92	92	87	92	92	91	92	91	87	94	91	90
KOC 3	92	93	88	92	94	90	93	94	92	94	95	92	95	95	91
KOC 4	88	89	83	92	91	87	92	91	89	92	92	87	92	92	88

MATHEMATICS

	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC	EE	LE	SEC
	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83	1983/84	1984/85										
KOC 1	90	83	85	86	80	82	91	86	83	92	87	83	91	83	85
KOC 2	94	90	88	97	94	90	96	94	90	96	93	90	95	92	89
KOC 3	95	93	93	95	93	92	95	94	92	96	93	92	95	93	91
KOC 4	93	89	88	93	91	88	94	91	89	94	92	88	94	92	88

B. Fiscal Ability Analysis

Cities and towns were grouped into four fiscal ability quartiles based equally on equalized property valuation per capita and income per capita. Performance results for each category of fiscal ability were compared. The results of this analysis of the 1984/85 figures were somewhat different from the findings of the previous three years.

Although a clear significant difference was found for listening at all grade levels and for all subject areas at the later elementary level, no significant differences were found for all other grade levels and subject areas. While previous years' analyses of the relationship between fiscal ability and student performance indicated a clear pattern of higher performance in communities with greater fiscal ability, this year's findings are not quite as clear.

It should be noted again that passing rates for communities are based on the local district's selection of grade levels, tests and passing standards. A uniform test and passing standard might well produce a much larger gap between the performance of rich and poor communities.

C. Instructional Expenditures Analysis

In contrast, an examination of the relationship between per pupil expenditure and student performance over the past four years has shown no consistent significant relationship between these two characteristics. In almost every instance, districts with a higher per pupil expenditure do not have predictably higher or lower passing rates than do districts with a lower level of expenditure. The figures given below illustrate the lack of relationship.

STUDENT/DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS

% OF STUDENTS NOT MEETING STANDARDS

<u>Secondary Reading</u>	
HIGHEST 25% EXPENDITURE COMMUNITIES	9%
LOWEST 25% EXPENDITURE COMMUNITIES	9%
<u>Later Elementary Mathematics</u>	
HIGHEST 25% EXPENDITURE COMMUNITIES	6%
LOWEST 25% EXPENDITURE COMMUNITIES	8%

SECTION IX - SUMMARY/DISCUSSION

A. Five-Year Performance Results

The Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been in effect for five years. The performance data for each of these years are summarized below:

TABLE 19
FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE DATA

READING

	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85
EARLY ELEMENTARY	93	92	93	94	94
LATER ELEMENTARY	91	91	91	91	92
SECONDARY	89	89	89	90	90

WRITING

	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85
EARLY ELEMENTARY	89%	91%	92%	93%	93%
LATER ELEMENTARY	89%	91%	91%	91%	93%
SECONDARY	86%	88%	88%	89%	89%

MATHEMATICS

	80/81	81/82	82/83	83/84	84/85
EARLY ELEMENTARY	93%	93%	94%	94%	94%
LATER ELEMENTARY	89%	90%	91%	91%	90%
SECONDARY	89%	88%	89%	89%	89%

- The percentage of students achieving minimum standards at each grade level and skill area in 1984/85 exceeded, except in one instance, the corresponding percentage in the first year of the Policy.
- The greatest improvement, at all grade levels, in percentages of students achieving minimum standards over the five year period of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy has been shown in writing.
- Early and later elementary students have consistently achieved minimum standards at a higher rate than students at the secondary level.
- The differences in the aggregate data over the five year period were small.

These summary results for the five years of the Basic Skills Improvement Policy indicate a very consistent pattern in the way districts are certifying students as having achieved minimum standards.

B. Discussion

The aggregate results of the past five years show a consistent pattern of high performance with small improvements from year to year. Districts have certified about 90% of their students as having achieved the minimum standards established by the district. Although the aggregate figures indicate that Massachusetts students have achieved minimum standards at a high rate, the results for some sub-populations have not paralleled the overall figures.

As indicated in Section VI of this report, Black and Hispanic students have not achieved minimum standards at the same rate as the rest of Massachusetts students. Over-representation of minority students in the failing and exempted populations suggests that, among minority students, achievement of minimum standards has continued to be a problem.

Analysis of the five year results also indicates a consistently higher failure rate among students in cities and in poor communities. In addition, a number of districts have documented a low percentage of students meeting the minimum standards established by the district. Results for 1984/85 at the secondary level show that a number of districts had at least 20% of their students failing to achieve minimum standards (31 districts in reading, 41 districts in writing and 40 districts in mathematics).

Passing percentages are determined by the minimum standard established by the district and vary considerably across districts. Uniform testing and standards required under Chapter 188 may show a different pattern of performance among districts.

BASIC SKILLS IMPROVEMENT POLICY

Major Department Publications

General

Basic Skills Improvement Policy and Regulations	January, 1979
1980/81 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in the Basic Skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics	December, 1981
1981/82 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in the Basic Skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics	February, 1983
1982/83 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in Basic Skills of Reading, Writing and Mathematics	February, 1984
1983/84 Statewide Summary of Student Achievement of Minimum Standards in Basic Skills of Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Listening	February, 1985

Implementation Guides

Assessing Basic Skills Achievement - Guide #1	April, 1983
Writing Assessment Manual - Guide #2 (Revised Edition)	March, 1981
Supplement to Writing Assessment Manual	January, 1982
Standards Setting Manual - Guide #3 (Revised Edition)	March, 1981
Forms and Procedures - Guide #4	December, 1979
Local Test Development Manual - Guide #5	November, 1981

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